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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
11 April 1975

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Indochina
(As of 1600 EDST)
No. 9

CAMBODIA

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[redacted] scheduled to begin the final evacuation from Phnom Penh at 2200 hours Washington time tonight. [redacted] As of today, the US Mission's evacuation list included 590 persons: 146 US citizens and 444 third-country nationals and Cambodians. [redacted]

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Political Developments

2. Meanwhile, the government today expressed "profound regrets" that President Ford did not ask Congress for more Cambodian aid. US defense attaches -- who have reported a number of minor anti-American incidents over the past few weeks -- believe that their military contacts have not yet had time to digest President Ford's speech. The attaches reported "business as usual" at Cambodian Army headquarters and various unit headquarters around the city, although they did note few people on the streets and a general undercurrent of tenseness and apprehension.

3. Acting president Saukham Koy apparently did recommend at an emergency cabinet session yesterday that Prime Minister Long Boret step down and allow Democratic Party leader Chau Sau to form a new government mandated to bring

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DIA review completed

the fighting to an end. Boret was reportedly planning to make a decision on the recommendation today.

The Tactical Situation

4. Communist forces have widened the gap in government defenses north of Pochentong airport but made no further efforts today to move closer to the airfield. Airstrikes in this sector reportedly killed some 500 troops yesterday. Government commanders were planning to mount a major counter-attack to close the gap today but some units were slow to move into position and the operation has been delayed until tomorrow. Northwest of Pochentong, other government units have recaptured several positions lost to the insurgents earlier in the week.

5. Communist gunners fired 25 rockets and 15 howitzer rounds at Pochentong today. The last two DC-8 flights were cancelled. An aircraft belonging to a Cambodian airline crashed after taking off today, killing an American pilot.

6. Along Route 4 west of Pochentong, government units have apparently decided to forego any attempt to retake a position four miles from the army's main ammunition dump. Communist units were reportedly moving into attack positions on both sides of the highway in this area late this afternoon, Phnom Penh time.

7. South of the capital, the Communist have stepped up ground probes against lightly defended government positions guarding the approaches to the suburb of Takhmau. Fighting on the east bank of the Mekong River opposite Phnom Penh has slackened.

VIETNAM

8. Saigon claims that the Communists were pushed out of Xuan Loc again on April 11. But heavy fighting is continuing in the area, and both sides are committing additional forces to the fray.



9. The South Vietnamese reportedly have flown a brigade of airborne troops into Xuan Loc, and a relief column made up of another airborne brigade and armor units is pushing eastward along Route 1 toward the city. This force is encountering stiff resistance. Saigon also plans to move additional armor units to the Xuan Loc area from west of the capital. The reinforcements will give the government the equivalent of about two divisions, and the region commander plans to launch a major counterattack against the Communists in the next day or so.

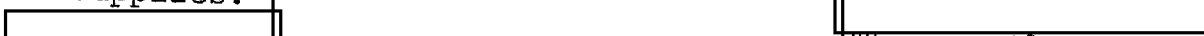
10. The government, however, faces a large North Vietnamese force at Xuan Loc, and the Communists also are supported by heavy artillery and tanks. The Communist 6th Division apparently began the attacks on Xuan Loc, and it has now been joined by the 7th and large parts of the 341st. A prisoner from the 7th Division claims all three of its infantry regiments as well as its artillery regiment have moved into Long Khanh Province.



Fighting Declines in the Delta

11. Communist attacks have declined in the delta, and the initiative has temporarily shifted to the government.

12. In the northern delta, South Vietnamese troops supported by armor overran a base area of the North Vietnamese 5th Division on the Cambodian border on April 10 and killed several dozen Communists and captured a substantial amount of supplies.



These setbacks will probably hamper Communist plans for launching new attacks in Hau Nghia and Long An provinces.

13. In the Can Tho battle front, the Communists appear to be abandoning their large scale tactics, presumably because they suffered heavy losses to government air and artillery fire each time they massed. Several small Communist units penetrated Can Tho's outer defenses on April 10 and 11, but they were intercepted by government helicopter gunships and took heavy losses.

1st Corps and 312th Division On the Way

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14. The North Vietnamese Army 1st Corps and 312th Division are making rapid progress in their move south.

15. The movement of the two units through the infiltration corridor of eastern Laos indicates that the corps and its four subordinate divisions are going to the Saigon area. Elements of the 312th could arrive there in the next two weeks. Other units belonging to the 1st Corps could reach the provinces north of Saigon even sooner.

Reactions to the President's Speech

18. Vietnamese Communist reaction to the President's address to Congress has been predictable. Their commentaries are accusing the President of requesting additional assistance for Saigon as a "sinister scheme" to continue "to force the South Vietnamese people to evacuate and to buy South Vietnamese children."

19. Viet Cong reaction, broadcast over Liberation Radio, focused on US Congressional reaction to the speech, citing the comments of various senators who opposed the aid requests.

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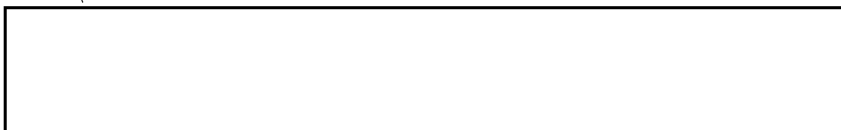


The Viet Cong repeated their standard position that the only solution to the conflict is for the US to "strictly implement" the Paris Agreements by "scrupulously and completely ending its military involvement and interference in South Vietnam."

20. Hanoi has bluntly rejected the President's request for a cease-fire. It charged that President Ford "hypocritically" was asking the South Vietnamese people to deprive themselves "of their legitimate right to punish the enemy" in order to protect the Paris Agreement.

21. South Vietnamese reaction appears to be one of limited encouragement coupled with disappointment that the speech did not go further. Acting Prime Minister Khiem has informed the information minister to downplay as much as possible "or even ignore" references to the evacuation of Americans and South Vietnamese. A civilian associate of labor leader Tran Quoc Buu felt that some South Vietnamese would interpret these references as a sign that the US had given up on South Vietnam. This same individual felt that what most Vietnamese were waiting to hear in the President's speech was some indication of US military intervention. He said that no one expects a massive retaliation by the US, but many were hoping that at least some military pressure would have been threatened to force Hanoi to return to the negotiating table.

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